SENATE SET TO VOTE ON STIMULUS PLAN, PG7

Celebrity Buzz

Could Simpson's weight gain be a baby?
pg 18

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Vancouver Games

Countdown to 2010

Today
- **Vancouver cracking down on street disorder, pg 5**

Coming up this week
- **Wednesday — Views of Canadians on the streets.**
- **Thursday — One-year countdown at Whistler**
- **Friday — Unveiling the Olympic torch**

Valentine's Day

Matters of the heart

Health & Beauty
- **Josey Vogels explores the unrealistic expectations of rom-com love, pg 13**
- **Got love? Your heart will thank you, pg 14**

Coming up this week
- **Wednesday — Georgie Binks take on relationships, the most romantic getaways in Canada and why movies are such a popular date-night choice.**
- **Thursday — Recipes for a cosy night in.**
- **Friday — Alan Cross and being careful with love songs.**

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Alberta firefighter Eben Smith (far left) with the Ovens, Victoria, Australia sustainability and environment fire crew with which he works. The 24-year-old from Crowsnest Pass, Alta., has been battling the devastating Australian bushfires since Saturday.

Albertan battling Australian bushfires

KRISTA SYLVESTER
krista.sylvester@metronews.ca

Though physically and emotionally exhausted after battling the searing heat and flames of Australian bushfires, Albertan Eben Smith can still find the silver lining amid the devastation down under.

The 24-year-old from Crowsnest Pass, Alta., has been fighting the deadly Australian fires since Saturday, and said the experience has reinforced his belief in humanity's compassionate response in disastrous times.

"This has shown me how close Australian people are and how they have come together to help each other," the rappel firefighter told Metro Calgary exclusively.

"After fighting fires and driving through the towns you see the people lined up in town, doing their bit to help."

COURTESY EBEN SMITH

Eben Smith said the areas ravaged by flames look like a "war zone."

The first three months of Smith's work with the department of sustainability and environment in Ovens, Victoria, Australia were uneventful — until he said a deadly recipe of heat, winds and an alleged arsonist created a disaster.

"It looks like a war zone. The trees are black and homes destroyed like a bomb hit them. This town used to be beautiful like Banff or Jasper, but now looks like a volcano," Smith said.

It is Smith's second stint fighting fires in Australia, a job he did for four years in Crowsnest Pass.

Smith said when the fires hit Saturday he was watching on the news with mixed emotions.

"You feel angry because someone may have done this on purpose. And so there is anger, but it is also sickening and saddening because of the people that lost their lives and homes," Smith said.

For now fighting the fires brings a sense of duty and Smith's training kicks in as second nature.

Smith modestly admits he is just one of thousands of firefighters doing the same thing.

"I'm not a hero. I'm just a regular guy doing his bit to help out."

At least 173 people have been confirmed killed in the fires, although an Australian newspaper said the toll may reach 230. Reports say at least a portion of the fires were deliberately set and the Victoria state police commissioner, Christine Nixon, launched "Operation Phoenix," to find those responsible.

WITH FILES FROM REUTERS

MORE COVERAGE, PAGE 7

Help out

- If Calgarians would like to help out, they can go to www.redcross.org.au.

Syncrude charged after duck deaths

JEFF CUMMINGS
Metro Canada

OILSANDS The province has charged Syncrude of violating its environmental enhancement act yesterday by not leaving appropriate deterrents in place at a tailings pond located at the company's Aurora North Site that killed 500 ducks last spring.

Alberta Environment Minister Rob Renner said the company could face the maximum penalty of a $500,000 fine and more charges against the company are pending after a federal investigation looked into the case.

"We believe that there was a contravention of our legislation and, obviously, the federal government believes that there was a contravention of their legislation," Renner said.

The provincial government is also seeking an alternative sentencing if Syncrude is convicted of the charge, Alberta Justice Minister Allison Redford said.

Syncrude will review the charges, spokesman Alain Moore said.

In a release after the incident, Syncrude blamed extreme weather conditions after the incident for not being able to place its propane-powered seasonal audible noisemakers at its tailings pond.

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Round-Up Centre honoured with Consumers' Choice Award
The Calgary Stampede Round-Up Centre earned its fifth consecutive Consumers' Choice Award for the city's favourite banquet/reception hall in business excellence on Sunday night at this year's Consumers' Choice Awards Gala. METRO CALGARY

Local

HERITAGE PARK HISTORICAL VILLAGE
How the West was Once

Good, old-fashioned romance

Heritage Park is offering couples a romantic Valentine's Day dinner at the elegant Wainwright Hotel. It is calling the event "truly traditional" as the three-course meal will be served Victorian-style in a pioneer setting. The menu features seared filet of Queen Charlotte Island Halibut, Alberta beef tenderloin, and oven-roasted chicken saltimbocca. METRO CALGARY

Violence in armed TD bank robbery worries city police

THEFT Police are worried about the level of violence involved during a weekend bank robbery in the city's southeast that left employees locked up in the vault.

Staff Sgt. Keith Cain said a man dressed in blue coveralls and a white hard hat brandishing a handgun followed employees into the TD Canada Trust in the 3000 block of 17 Ave. SE at 7:20 a.m.

"It's very unusual to have this level of violence and pre-planning. Absolutely, we would like to get this person before he does it again," Cain said.

Cain believes the suspect wore the construction gear with a black ski mask. KRISTA SYLVESTER/ METRO CALGARY

Firefighting ranks short

KRISTA SYLVESTER
krista.sylvester@metronews.ca

You can fill these boots.

That's the theme of a new recruiting drive to bolster Calgary fire department ranks by 200 during 2009.

Fire Chief Bruce Burrell said with looming retirements of 130 members this year and another 30 per cent eligible in the next 10 years, it's critical the department addresses its staffing needs now.

"Especially when the new fire halls are being built to meet the demands of the city growth," he added.

At a time when other organizations are facing layoffs, the recruitment drive presents an opportunity to Calgarians looking for a stable career, Deputy Chief Ken Uzeloc said.

"We're offering tremendous opportunities for people to work in a challenging job, and they will never regret it," Uzeloc added.

Lieut. Stu Laird, a former Calgary Stampeder, said becoming a firefighter is a fulfilling career choice with many opportunities.

"It's more than being a firefighter on a fire truck … we can make a difference in the community. Every firefighter has a story (like that)," the 20-year veteran said.

The fire department has made it easier for interested applicants by eliminating the $150 application fee and offering first aid classes as opposed to requiring it at application time.

Burrell said a few of those changes alone will save applicants several thousand dollars.

There are currently 1,289 staff members in the fire department.

ROBIN KUNISKI / FOR METRO CALGARY

Fire Chief Bruce Burrell slides down a fire pole at fire department headquarters as the department kicks off a drive to recruit 200 new firefighters.

Witnesses sought in robbery of slain man's truck

MURDER Police are looking for witnesses who may have seen a stolen truck that belonged to slain 77-year-old Rino (Ray) Johnston.

While a married couple were arrested and charged in the murder, police are hoping to find two Good Samaritans who may have helped get the truck unstuck in an off-road location on Jan. 30.

Police are looking for anyone who saw the white 2008 GMC extended cab-truck with a white topper on Jan. 30 and Feb. 5 to call police. METRO CALGARY

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WHAT'S ONLINE TODAY
Your Money Allan Small weighs the pros and cons of RRSPs versus Tax Free Savings Accounts at **metronews.ca/investing**

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RCMP upgrade murder charges

Red Deer RCMP has upgraded murder charges against a man in the death of 23-year-old Teagan Klein. Brett Jones is now facing first-degree murder charges in the victim's death. He is set to appear in Red Deer provincial court on Feb. 17. METRO CALGARY

Canadian health in trouble: Poll

FOOD Canada's health is in jeopardy due to high costs for healthy food, according to the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

Some Canadians are paying almost six times what other Canadians spend for the same basic healthy food, the foundation said yesterday, with some of the highest prices being in Calgary.

Because of the high cost, a national poll conducted by the foundation found that almost half of Canadians report going without fresh fruit, vegetables, dairy products, whole grain products, lean meat and fish.

City housing faces another downturn

REAL ESTATE Calgary's sinking real estate sector got more bad news yesterday.

Total housing starts in Calgary were down 66 per cent compared with the same month in 2008, according to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp.

Multi-family starts saw an 89 per cent decline last month. METRO CALGARY

Political players unite

ALICIA FOX
for Metro Calgary

The Council of Atlantic Premiers met with potential business partners in the Palliser Hotel yesterday to discuss future partnerships amidst a faltering economy.

At a luncheon hosted by the Calgary Chamber of Commerce, Premier Robert Ghiz of P.E.I., Premier Shawn Graham of New Brunswick, Cecil Clarke, attorney general and minister of justice for Nova Scotia, and Shawn Skinner, minister of innovation, trade and rural development in Newfoundland and Labrador, presented the possibility of getting a piece of Alberta's still-strong economy.

All four said their first priority was the economy, addressing the balance Canada needs between green energy and development and the co-operation between Alberta's and the eastern provinces' labour forces.

"I think when the economy does recover, it will be Alberta leading the way," Ghiz said, adding that Alberta still needs the goods and services provided by the island province.

Graham said he hopes to see elected officials open the door for companies a country apart to work together.

"Follow-up work … will be done by companies behind the scenes that will return that dividend for both respective economies," Graham said.

During the luncheon, he told the Chamber of Commerce that as New Brunswick develops in its own energy sector, it hopes to become "the next Alberta."

Clarke also mentioned a need to invest more in research and development, saying that "good science will lead the way" into the future.

ROBIN KUNISKI / FOR METRO CALGARY

Shawn Graham, premier of New Brunswick, left, Mayor Dave Bronconnier and Cecil Clarke, attorney general and minister of justice for Nova Scotia, all get white-hatted at the Atlantic Canada Supply Chain Breakfast at the Fairmont Palliser Hotel.

Virologist Luc Montagnier

Discoverer of HIV visits university

JENNIFER HILLIKER
for Metro Calgary

RESEARCH The man who discovered the HIV virus inspired students at the University of Calgary yesterday.

French virologist and 2008 Nobel Prize winner Luc Montagnier presented a lecture describing how he first made the discovery in 1983.

Montagnier told students he would like to see more resources put into finding a cure for AIDS. He's concerned that a lot of money has been spent for nothing, due to vaccine research that was headed in the wrong direction.

"Any vaccine based on antibodies will actually infect," Montagnier said. "They should have known this."

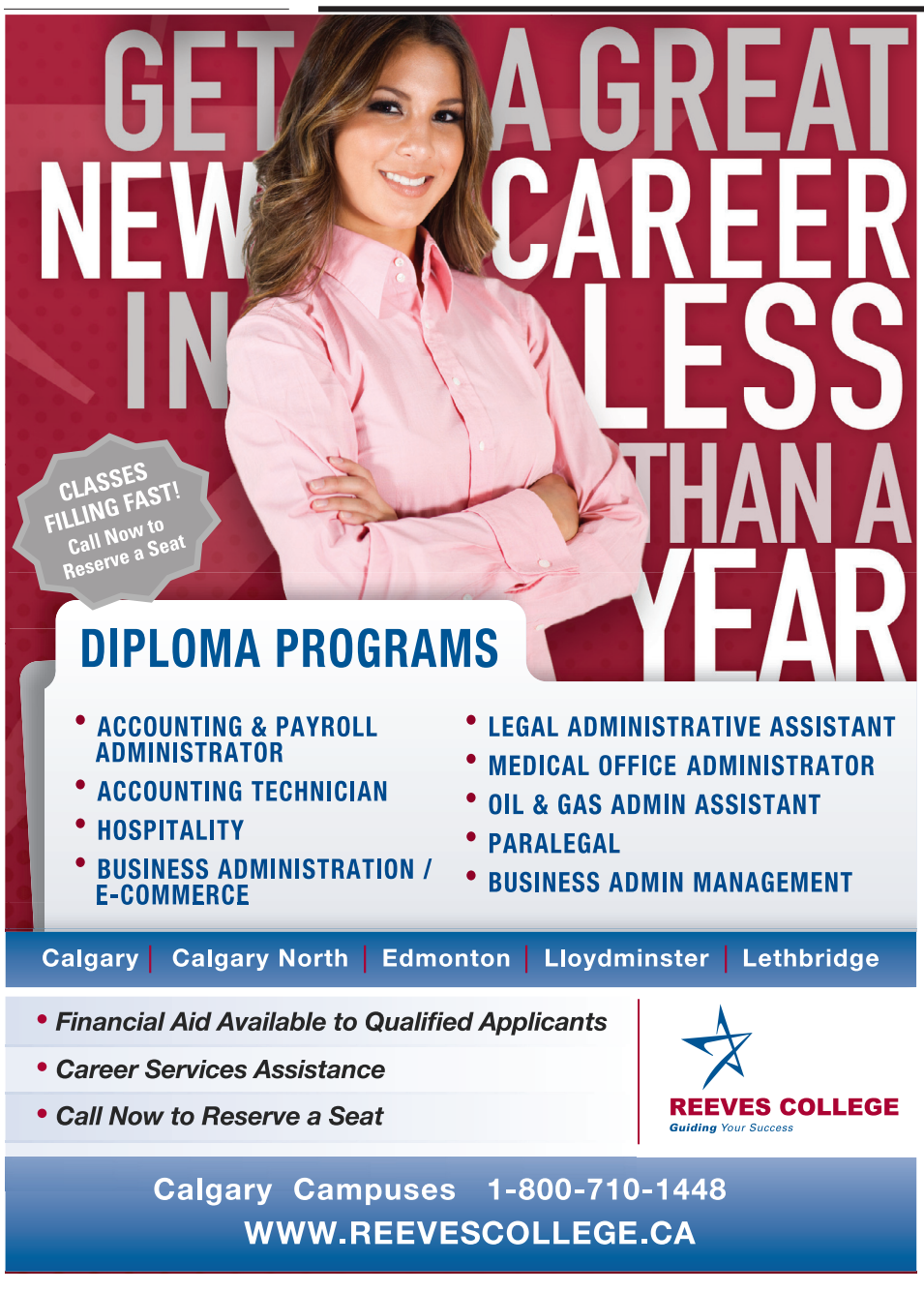
Research associate Vincent Pialoux moved here from France two years ago, and was impressed to see a French doctor travel to Calgary to share his words of wisdom.

"I was surprised to hear that he was coming," said Pialoux. "It's of such great importance to hear men like this for the University of Calgary students and faculty."

PhD student Vincent Marty said he wants to follow in the footsteps of Montagnier.

Dispute

- A U.S. government patent for the AIDS test, based on what was claimed to be Robert Gallo's identification, was filed in 1985 by the U.S. health dept.
- In 1987, both France and the U.S. attempted to end the dispute by arranging to split the prestige of discovery and the proceeds from the patent 50-50, naming Luc Montagnier and Robert Gallo co-discoverers of the HIV virus.



Court hears teen's crash testimony

VICTORIA HANDYSIDES
for Metro Canada

TRIAL Nineteen-year-old Robert Wasyliw testified in Edmonton yesterday on the first day of the impaired driving trial of Douglas Kurtis Brown, the Edmonton police officer accused of blowing a red light around 2 a.m. on May 11, allegedly t-boning the teen's vehicle and seriously injuring him.

"I remember having drips of flame hit me from the passenger's side," Wasyliw recalled. "I huddled up to keep the flames from hitting me. I just remember being balled up in a little ball on the ground."

As a result of the wreck, Wasyliw reportedly spent two weeks in hospital for treatment of second- and third-degree burns.

Defence lawyer Peter Northcott challenged Wasyliw's claim that he'd only had a few sips of beer before the accident, suggesting the teen told emergency room doctors he'd had three or four beers that night. Wasyliw denied the suggestion.

"I remember having drips of flame hit me from the passenger's side. I huddled up to keep the flames from hitting me"
Robert Wasyliw

Brown is charged with five counts of impaired driving causing bodily harm, five counts of dangerous driving causing bodily harm and one count of driving with a blood-alcohol reading over the limit.

News in brief

MONEY More than double the number of Albertans filed for bankruptcy in December of last year, compared to the same month the year before. According to the latest government statistics, 638 consumers and businesses in the province filed for bankruptcy in December, compared with 321 in December 2007.

CRIME A retired police officer admitted in court yesterday he downloaded child pornography while he was on the force. Steve Huggett admitted being in possession of videos and images of young children. He pleaded guilty of the crimes in 2007.

METRO CALGARY

Man charged with assisting a suicide
Police in Thunder Bay, Ont., are appealing for help in locating the friends and relatives of a 38-year-old Waterloo, Ont., woman who died last week in an alleged suicide assisted by her husband. Peter Fonteece, 46, has been charged with criminal negligence causing death and assisting a suicide. **CBC NEWS ONLINE**

Canada

MacKay backs NATO drug raids

The hunt for Afghans who use drug profits to help fund the Taliban is a "legitimate exercise" for Canadian soldiers, Defence Minister Peter MacKay, left, said yesterday. But while Canada stands behind the NATO policy to target drug producers and traffickers linked to the insurgency, the country's 2,800 Kandahar-based soldiers are unlikely to take part in drug raids any time soon, MacKay said. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Cleaning up for the Games?

ANDREA WOO
for Metro Canada

VANCOUVER
2010 **Games**

With Vancouver's turn on the world stage rapidly approaching, the city is cracking down on street disorder offences — a move some believe is intended to minimize the presence of the homeless in 2010.

According to the Vancouver Police Department's 2008 annual business plan report-back, officers issued 467 tickets for violations of the Safe Streets Act last year, up from 202 in 2007.

They also issued 133 tickets for violations of the Trespass Act, up from 95 in 2007. Officers ticketed 439 people for panhandling, loitering and unlicensed street vending last year, up from 247 in 2007.

"It's been shown that (the Safe Streets and Trespass acts) disproportionately affect poor people," said Harsha Walia, project co-ordinator at the Downtown Eastside Women's Shelter. "For example, while jaywalking is something those acts prohibit, the only place it's enforced on a large scale is the Downtown Eastside."

David Eby, acting executive director of the B.C. Civil Liberties Association, explains that, in court, repeat offenders are typically given "no-go" orders, forbidding them from returning to the area where the offences were committed.

"It's an effort to move people out of the Downtown Eastside, in my opinion," said Eby.

The VPD, however, says such crackdowns are simply part of a larger goal to improve liveability by combating activities that contribute to urban decay.

"What we're doing is ... increasing our visibility in the Downtown Eastside," said spokeswoman Const. Jana McGuinness. "Everything we're doing now, we'll be doing well after the Olympics as well. There's no big movement to sweep the city."

McGuinness attributes a disproportionately high number of tickets written in the Downtown Eastside to the area having a "24-7 lifestyle" and a near-constant presence of people committing violations such as jaywalking.

JENNIFER GAUTHIER/FOR METRO CANADA

Two men sit by a doorway in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside yesterday. The area is Canada's poorest postal code.

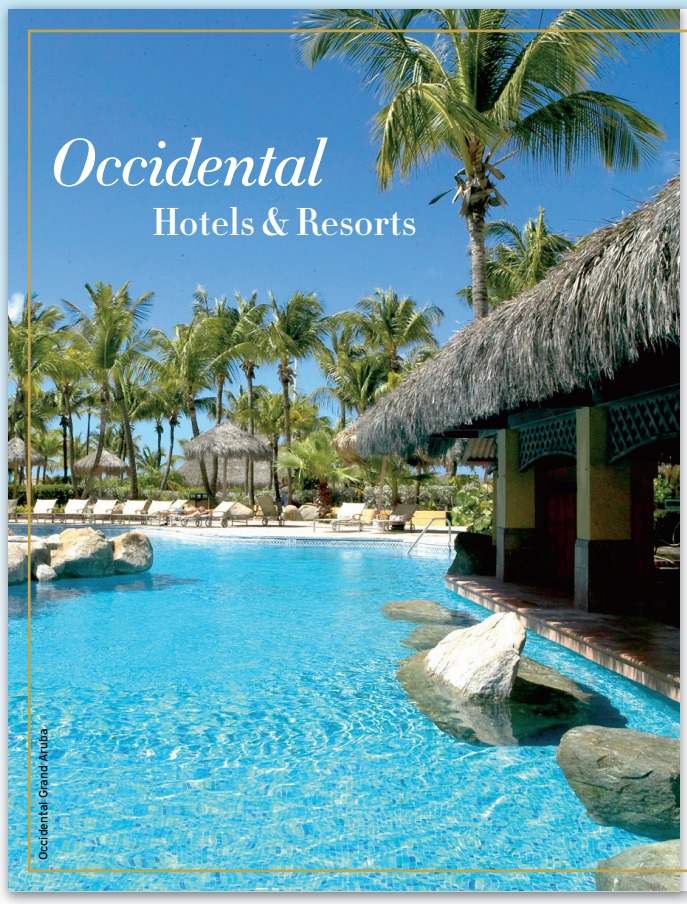
Bus tickets, arrests for homeless at '96 Atlanta Games

REPORT In the lead-up to the 1996 Summer Games, Atlanta passed strict anti-loitering and panhandling laws that led to the arrests of more than 9,000 people from May 1995 to May 1996 — four times more than in preceding years, according to the New York Times.

Anita Beaty, co-director of the Atlanta Task Force on the Homeless, said the arrests were often for crimes such as being in a parking lot without a car or lying down on a public park bench.

According to the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, homeless people were also given free one-way bus tickets out of the city. ANDREA WOO/ FOR METRO CANADA

AIR CANADA VACATIONS



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Ice storm ravages Manitoba

Staff at Winnipeg hospitals were kept busy yesterday treating people who sustained injuries in falls because of icy conditions caused by one of the worst ice storms in recent memory. Freezing rain across southern Manitoba halted highway traffic, delayed air travel and caused spot power outages in the morning. **CBC NEWS ONLINE**

Delegates decry flower trade

Valentine's**Day**

Flowers from Colombia are grown in blood, according to a small delegation from that country asking Canadians to think twice about the origin of flowers they buy for Valentine's Day.

CARLOS OSORIO/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Colombian human-rights activists Maria del Carmen Sanchez Burgos, from left, Yolanda Becerra Vega and German Casam Gindram sit down with Torstar News Service reporter Linda Deibel to discuss how the new Canadian-Colombian Free Trade Agreement destroys small farming in Colombia.

It's the blood of women and children as young as 10 who work in slave labour conditions in sprawling greenhouses around the capital. They arrive from all over the country to package beauty, working long hours for little pay, no guaranteed labour rights and health problems that include infertility, lung disorders, joint issues and cancer.

"It is essentially slave labour," Yolanda Becerra Vega, director of the Popular Women's Organization, said yesterday. The Amnesty International-sponsored delegation is here to plead with Canadian parliamentarians to reject the Canada-Colombia free-trade agreement, signed last November and expected to be introduced in the House soon.

Becerra Vega is recognized internationally for human rights work in a country where grassroots activists are regularly targeted by death squads with proven links to the military. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

News in brief

BUDGET Canada's top astronaut Steve MacLean told CBC yesterday he was pleased with Ottawa's contribution of $110 million over three years toward robotics research in the federal budget. MacLean said the Canadian Space Agency has an eye toward developing a next-generation rover to explore the Moon or Mars.

OTTAWA Many commuters stepped aboard Ottawa city buses yesterday morning for the first time in two months. Although a limited number of buses started rolling on Saturday, yesterday was the first day transit was back to full service since members of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 279 walked off the job Dec. 10. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Rights commission under fire

FREE SPEECH The Ontario Human Rights Commission should be disbanded because it "tramples" on everything from free speech to the justice system," says commentator Mark Steyn.

"I believe in the abolition of the commission, because I believe the commission is nothing but ideological activists," Steyn, a Toronto-born, New Hampshire-based columnist, told the committee.

"I believe the commission is nothing but ideological activists." Mark Steyn

"I have no objection to that. I've been accused of that myself. But I do it on my own dime and I don't see why (commission chief Barbara) 'commissar' Hall and her colleagues shouldn't also do it on their own dime."

Steyn's antipathy stems from fallout over articles he wrote for Maclean's, including one entitled, The Future Belongs to Islam.

The 2006 piece, an excerpt from his book America Alone, argued a youthful, rapidly growing Muslim population hastens the decline of Western civilization.

While Hall's commission, citing a lack of jurisdiction, dismissed a Canadian Islamic Congress complaint over Steyn's writing — as did the Canadian Human Rights Commission and the B.C. Human Rights Commission — they still condemned him. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

Ticketmaster faces scalping suit

ONLINE Ticketmaster Entertainment Inc. was hit with a $500-million lawsuit yesterday, alleging the company broke the law by reselling tickets at inflated prices.

A Toronto man who tried to buy two tickets to a November 2008 concert by the band Smashing Pumpkins alleges Ticketmaster's website said none were available, but redirected him to the website of the company's TicketsNow resale unit. **REUTERS**

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Egyptian police detain blogger: Group
Egyptian police have beaten and detained 22-year-old Egyptian blogger and activist Diaa Eddin Gad, who has expressed support for Gaza, a human rights group said. Bloggers have become a major target of police assault, the group noted in a statement. REUTERS

World

Where do they carry their cash?

Naked mountain hikers in the Swiss canton of Appenzell-Innerrhoden will in the future face on-the-spot fines of 200 Swiss francs ($210), a newspaper reported. Naked hiking, particularly popular with German visitors, has outraged residents in the traditionally minded canton, which gave women the right to vote only in 1990. "We must protect our children from these immoral habits," said an official. REUTERS

Death toll from bushfires in Australia reaches 173

FIRE Weary firefighters and rescuers pulled the remains of dozens of people from charred buildings yesterday as the toll from Australia's deadliest bushfires rose to 173, police said.

"Everybody's gone. Everybody's gone. Everybody. Their houses are gone. They're all dead in the houses there. Everybody's dead," cried survivor Christopher Harvey as he walked through the town of Kinglake, where most people were killed.

Police believe some of the fires, which razed rural towns near the country's second biggest city, Melbourne, were deliberately lit and declared the devastated town of Marysville a crime scene.

In Canberra, lawmakers suspended parliament for the day after expressing condolences to the victims. REUTERS

News in brief

ITALY Eluana Englaro, the comatose woman at the centre of a right-to-die case in Italy, died yesterday after nutrition was stopped four days ago.

PAKISTAN At least 13 people were killed yesterday when two bombs hit a house during a military battle with the Taliban, the military and residents said.

STUDY U.S. researchers have found 28 per cent of people unwilling to quit smoking for their health would try to quit to spare their pets second-hand smoke. REUTERS

Stimulus on track

The U.S. Senate moved a step closer yesterday toward approving U.S. President Barack Obama's plan to jolt the U.S. economy out of recession with government spending and tax breaks, setting up a vote to pass the $838-billion US emergency package today.

After a week of contentious debate, senators reached a deal to pare down the stimulus bill by about $100 billion and voted 61-36, with minimal Republican support, to hold a final ballot today.

If the measure passes as expected, the Senate and House will enter final negotiations on a compromise bill, with Obama arbitrating disputes. The cost of the House bill was priced at $819 billion.

Republicans say some spending in the bill would not boost the economy. But Democrats, who control Congress and the White House, argued that a mix of tax cuts and spending were urgently needed.

The bill advanced in the Senate as Obama hit the road with a town hall-style meeting in Elkhart, Ind., and was set for a prime-time evening news conference to push his call for urgent action on the bill. REUTERS

SCOTT OLSON/GETTY IMAGES

U.S. President Barack Obama addresses residents yesterday during a town hall-style meeting in Elkhart, Ind., where the White House said the unemployment rate had hit 15.3 per cent.

China denies human rights violations

CRITICISM China yesterday defended its human rights record, rejecting suggestions from Western countries that it uses torture, jails dissidents and allows child labour and insisting its policies are guided by the rule of law.

It told the UN Human Rights Council that allegations it oppressed ethnic groups in Tibet and other parts of the country were political propaganda aimed at denigrating China's achievements.

The discussion came in a new process called the Universal Periodic Review, under which all United Nations members are expected to submit themselves every four years to scrutiny of their human rights record. REUTERS

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Comment

New course, new times

National**Report**

Lawrence Martin

Before we start banging ourselves on the head over the great economic sag, one fact is worth remembering. This isn't our doing.

The recession that pummelled us in the early 1990s was, in good part, made in Canada. It was spurred by deficits, debts, high inflation and ulcerous interest rates. The recession of the early 1980s also was homegrown to a good degree.

But today's adversity was brought on chiefly by American debt and deregulation. We had neither problem. Paul Martin wisely did not deregulate the banking system like they did south of the border. And our debts and deficits were under control. We can't blame our plight on the politically obsessed Stephen Harper government, either. Its economic management — witness last fall's shenanigans — has hardly been sterling, but this recession would have hit no matter what it did over the last three years.

So, while we love to blame our politicians for everything, this is not the time. Rather than going on any guilt trips, the country should follow the lead as recommended in a report last week on the Ontario economy by Roger Martin and Richard Florida.

Stimulus schemes and handouts, they say, may be necessary to prop up the old economy. "As in all times of economic crisis, there is considerable pressure on governments to protect the past and undertake bailouts." That said, "There is a better way."

"Start making the big moves to an idea-driven, creative economy based not on goods, but on services."

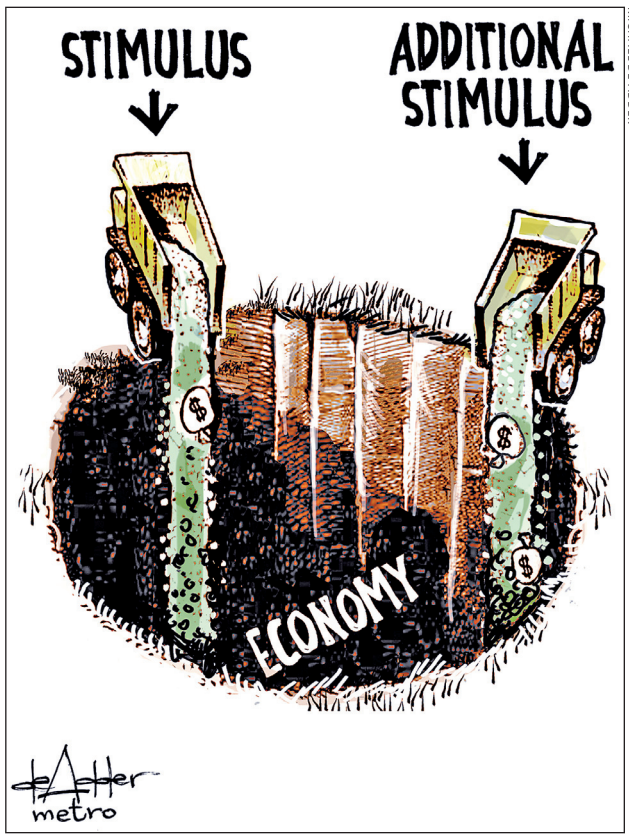
Our leaders, they suggest, need to capitalize on the current plight to drive home the need to move off the old industrial economy. Start making the big moves to an idea-driven, creative economy based not on goods, but on services. Put the stress on the development of knowledge workers, on research and development, on innovation.

That's at home. Abroad, which was not a focus of the report, there has to be a lessening of our dependence, for obvious reasons, on the United States. The Harper government is finally starting to do that with Trade Minister Stockwell Day pursuing new trade agreements on other continents.

A creative economy doesn't rely on outmoded strategies at home and abroad. It requires leaders of foresight. If not Stephen Harper, the Creative Society is a vision, you would think, that might perfectly suit brainy new Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff. It moves beyond political gamesmanship and last-century methods. It charts a new course for the new times.

Today's made-out-of-Canada recession should serve as a catalyst to bring it on.

Lawrence Martin is a Globe and Mail correspondent and author who writes about national affairs from Ottawa.



MICHAEL DE ADDER

Views

Fashion can cheer up gloomy moods

Lisa Tant
Fashion & Beauty Expert

Imagine a world without music, art or fashion.

You'd wake up in your sensible white-walled home and dress in your functional daily navy uniform before heading out to a structured nine-to-five office. Think of how sombre and depressing your mood would be to match. That's all I can visualize when asked what place fashion has in a world littered with pink slips and shrinking stock portfolios.

There's no doubt that our perception of fashion is changing. A status symbol for the past decade, "it" bags — a must-have $1,000-plus design toted by celebs and their wannabes — are now yesterday's news. Head-to-toe designer labels are considered gauche, and bling is now more quaint than fierce. Yet, just because we're dialling down our showy love for high-profile, high-status fashion, that doesn't mean our passion for style has gone the way of Uggs and track suits.

Fashion has always been a defining sign of self-expression and that's not about to change. What will change is what and how we buy. Trying times bring out the best in our creativity, imagination and innovation — and that magical equation cannot be defined by a label or price tag.

Michelle Obama

A perfect example is how mall stores, including H&M and Gap, have been collaborating on wallet-friendly collections with high-profile designers from Rei Kawakubo of Comme des Garcons to Thakoon. In April, H&M will be launching a limited edition line with British designer Matthew Williamson. The payoff is mutually beneficial — Williamson, a little known name in North America, is introduced to masses of potential new fans, while H&M gets the cachet of a major insider name.

The biggest mistake a retailer could make in tough times is to stock its shelves with safe classics in predictable colours. Who really needs another white shirt or black pencil skirt? If we're going to loosen our pinched-tight purse strings it will be to splurge on mood-boosting colour, pattern or decorative accessories.

Notice how Michelle Obama chose change-inspiring yellow — a sunny silk brocade topper and dress by Isabel Toledo — at her husband's inauguration. Likewise, cheerful optimism shapes the madcap fashion in February's Confessions of a Shopaholic, the unlikely story of a fashion-crazed shopper turned financial adviser.

Every savvy shopper knows that a little creative retail therapy always does the heart good.

Lisa Tant is editor-in-chief of FLARE Magazine and former executive editor of Chatelaine Magazine.

Letters

Discrimination against one is discrimination against all

"I don't see Muslims, Jews, Christians or Hindus advertising their beliefs on buses." (Re: Nadia Ramadan letter, Feb. 9)

To say that religious groups can't buy ads on Calgary buses is false and misleads the intentions of the atheist bus ads. If a Christian or any other religious group is able to promote its beliefs on the side of a city bus, why are atheists prohibited?

Canadians should not allow discrimination against atheists.

LYNDSAY PETERS, CALGARY

Various religious groups have used advertising campaigns

Re: Atheist ads promote debate, understanding (Feb. 5)

I am not atheist, but I can't understand why people are so offended.

Various religious groups have used advertising and it has never been viewed as offensive. If we find this miniscule form of free speech offensive, should we not be offended if someone starts preaching about God on the side of the street and reciting a sermon from the Bible?

Many religions don't need to advertise on buses when they have billboards or television programs and channels devoted to their religions. Should someone that is not of that religion be offended?

After all, they are only voicing their own opinion through an ad on a bus, which is hardly harmful to anyone. Although some make it out to sound like an infectious disease that needs cleansing.

NICHOLAS WITHAM, CALGARY

Letter is an insult to non-believers everywhere

"It's plain to see that spirituality has a strong bearing on morality" is an insult to "non-believers" everywhere. Re: Abe Samuel letter (Feb. 9)

Just because we don't believe in an invisible man doesn't mean we lack moral responsibility.

My parents taught me right from wrong, just as my children will learn it from me.

Samuel sounds to me like one of those "freedom of speech, as long as I don't disagree with it" types of people.

STEVE AYOTTE, CALGARY

It's your turn to tell others what you think. E-mail your thoughts and opinions to: calgaryletters@metronews.ca
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Disney, DreamWorks enter long-term distribution deal
Walt Disney Studios yesterday confirmed it has entered a long-term film distribution agreement with DreamWorks Studios principals Steven Spielberg and Stacey Snider. Disney said in a statement that it will distribute and market about six live-action films per year for DreamWorks. REUTERS

Business

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EDITOR: FERMIN DESOUZA, FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

Loonie to return to parity: Expert

Canada's currency will return to par with its U.S. counterpart in as little as six months as commodity prices rebound, pessimism peaks and the nation's political turmoil abates, according to economist Dennis Gartman.

"I can feel myself getting ready to be quite bullish on the Canadian dollar," said Gartman, the editor of the Gartman Letter, who correctly predicted the currency's most recent run to parity in 2007. "I have the sense that this might be a move back towards par and beyond."

"I have the sense that this might be a move back towards par and beyond."
Dennis Gartman, economist

The Canadian dollar reached equal value to the U.S. dollar in September 2007 for the first time in three decades as prices soared for commodities such as crude oil, which account for about half the country's export revenue. It plummeted 18 per cent last year as a global recession curbed demand for the same commodities. The currency is down 1.6 per cent this year.

Gartman's call on the Canadian dollar is at odds with the forecast of 44 economists surveyed by Bloomberg News. On average, they see the currency weakening to $1.25 Cdn against the greenback by the end of June before rising to $1.20 by the year's end. None expect the loonie to reach parity this year. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Personal bankruptcies up 50%

FINANCE Personal bankruptcy filings in Canada rose more than 50 per cent in December from the same month of 2007, according to data released yesterday, a trend that parallels a jump in unemployment and debt as the economy slides into recession.

Figures released by the Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy Canada also showed that bankruptcies filed by businesses increased by just 2.4 per cent over the same period.

Total bankruptcies last year rose 12.3 per cent over 2007, an increase driven by personal insolvencies as business bankruptcies dropped two per cent year over year. REUTERS

Partial judgment for Madoff

COURT Accused Wall Street swindler Bernard Madoff has agreed to a partial judgment in the civil case brought by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission without admitting or denying fraud charges, the regulator said yesterday.

The SEC said the agreement with Madoff extends an asset freeze on the former Nasdaq stock exchange chairman, with the amount of penalties and disgorgement to be decided later.

Madoff, 70, is under house arrest and 24-hour surveillance after being accused of one count of securities fraud. REUTERS

Business in brief

MINING Xstrata Nickel, a cornerstone of the workforce in Sudbury, Ont., axed 686 jobs yesterday as it closes two old mines in the midst of what it calls "ongoing challenging market conditions" that have seen nickel prices plummet and demand evaporate. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

FAST FOOD McDonald's Corp. yesterday posted a better-than-expected 7.1 per cent rise in global January sales at restaurants open at least 13 months, driven by strength in nearly all of its markets.

AUTOS Nissan Motor Co. has said it will cut 20,000 jobs and joined a growing list of automakers warning of red ink this year in what would mark its first loss since chief executive Carlos Ghosn took the reins a decade ago.

BANKS British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, seeking to head off mounting public anger over bankers' bonuses, pledged yesterday to end rewards for failure in a financial system crippled by the credit crisis. REUTERS

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Your Money

EDITOR: NINA DRAGICEVIC, NINA.DRAGICEVIC@METRONEWS.CA

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Love for less

Valentine's Day

SmartCookies

Each February, millions of men around the planet agonize over the details of extravagant dates, in hopes of getting lucky in the love department. But this year, if layoffs, market crashes and general financial uncertainty don't get you in the mood, we completely understand. So whether it's your first date, a blossoming romance or your long-time love, here are some suggestions for dates that are completely free and will help remind you what's really important:

FIRST DATE

Must love dogs

Take the edge off a first date by walking a dog together. Don't have a four-legged friend? Borrow one from a friend, or even better, visit your local animal shelter and volunteer to walk a hard-up pup together. It's guaranteed that conversation will flow more easily and, if need be, the puppy will offer a fun little distraction.

Reality romance

You're paying for cable so why not use it? Plan an evening in and watch the current "it" reality show. To really get into the Valentine's mood we suggest The Bachelor (guys, don't knock it till you try it). Why not place a bet on who doesn't get the rose? Loser owes the winner a back rub.

DATING

Cheese please

Get onto your favourite specialty store's online newsletter list to receive notice of free events and discounts. Free wine plus free cheese equals great date!

Free tours

Check out a free factory tour. Free tours are offered at a variety of fascinating places. They can be specific to your interests, provide lots of opportunity for conversation and even free samples. We recommend checking out a brewery and then splitting a pitcher of beer after.

LONG-TERM/MARRIED

House hunter

Plan a driving tour of your favourite neighbourhood, checking out show homes and open houses. Not only with you be able to pick up some great decorating tips but it will also get you on the same page in terms of saving for the future for that dream home. Plus, sometimes it's fun to find out how other people live!

Heart art

Get cultured and check out art galleries and museums. Check to see if they have a "by donation" night so you can save money on admission. Some galleries even offer memberships, whereby you can pay an annual fee and go as often as you like.

BOTTOM LINE

Now more than ever, we're realizing that what's really important is not what we spend our money on but how we spend our time. So put your wallet away and cuddle up close this Valentine's Day!

Tune into Smart Cookies on the W Network, Mondays at 10:30 p.m.

Tune in Monday nights at 10:30 p.m. EST/PST on the W Network and be sure to visit smartcookies.com for more tips.

Investing

Allan Small

Visit metronews.ca for a comparison of investment, RRSP and tax-free savings accounts.

Cashing out a loss

MoneyMatters

Henry Choo Chong
choochonghcga@yahoo.ca

Q In January, I decided to liquidate most of my RRSP and non-RRSP stock portfolio. After crunching the numbers, total gains minus losses left about a $20,000 loss. All my RRSP proceeds were taken out. How much of these amounts can I deduct when preparing my tax return in March? — Kim

A In these uncertain times, it is not unreasonable for individuals to cash out of the stock market.

These are scary days, even for professionals. Many financial advisers insist, "Don't cash out if you are in for the long term!" However, if it brings peace of mind, then you must do what you must do.

Any transaction executed after December 2008 (aside from any RRSP contributions to March 2, 2009 or superficial losses) are reported on your 2009 tax filing.

Therefore, withdrawals, sales, taxable income or losses will not affect 2008 tax returns. For 2009, you will have to determine what and how much income to report:

- Separate RRSP dispositions from non-RRSP transactions.
- All RRSP dispositions will have no immediate tax consequences, as they are tax sheltered.
- All RRSP withdrawals will be fully taxable for that year. The financial institution will provide a T-4RSP slip on or before Feb. 28, 2010.
- Calculate and offset capital gains against capital losses for non-RRSP dispositions. The net amount must be reported on 2009 tax return.
- Taxes are paid on 50 per cent of capital gains, while excess capital losses can be applied to reduce capital gains in prior three years or carried forward in subsequent years.

Your tax adviser/accountant should provide some advice in these matters.

Reach Henry Choo Chong, CGA, at choochonghcga@yahoo.ca.

Career Finder

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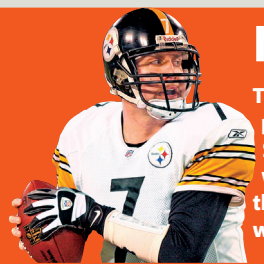
Scolari canned
Luiz Felipe Scolari was fired as Chelsea manager yesterday, after just seven months on the job for the English soccer power. Chelsea has dropped 16 points at home this season and currently sits seven points behind Manchester United. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Sports



No chicken with his ribs?

The Pittsburgh Steelers said that they were unaware Ben Roethlisberger played the Super Bowl with two broken ribs, as the quarterback told Sports Illustrated yesterday. Roethlisberger said he knew something was wrong during the week before the game, that he played through the pain and that the injury was only detected in an MRI he had last week.
METRO NEWS SERVICES

EDITOR: JOHN CHICK, JOHN.CHICK@METRONEWS.CA

Rodriguez: 'I'm guilty'

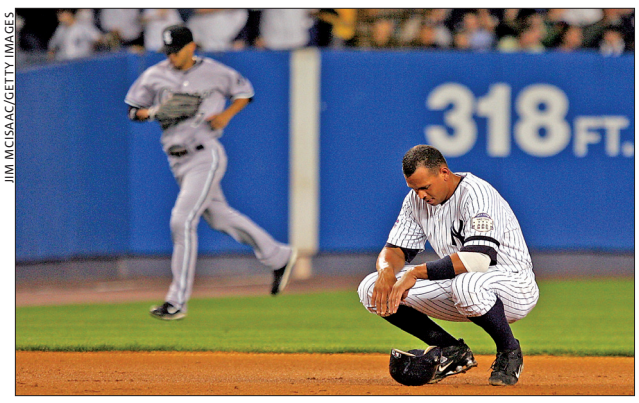
New York Yankees slugger Alex Rodriguez admitted yesterday he had tested positive for performance-enhancing drugs in 2003.

"I did take a banned substance. For that I'm very sorry and deeply regretful," Rodriguez told ESPN in response to a report in Sports Illustrated that he had been one of 104 players who had tested positive that year.

Although there were no penalties for a positive test in 2003, confidential testing was conducted by Major League Baseball in agreement with the players' union to determine if random testing should be introduced in the following year.

Sports Illustrated said the Yankee third baseman had tested positive for a steroid and the male sex hormone testosterone.

Rodriguez, 33, baseball's highest paid player and one year into a 10-year, $275-million contract with the Yankees, said he had cheated during his three seasons with the Texas Rangers starting in 2001 but not since.



JIM MCISAAC/GETTY IMAGES

Alex Rodriguez admitted to using performance-enhancing drugs during an ESPN interview yesterday.

Obama reacts

• U.S. president Barack Obama said last night that Rodriguez's admission was "depressing news on top of what has been a flurry of depressing" developments.

"When I arrived in Texas in 2001 I felt an enormous amount of pressure. I felt like I had all the weight of the world on top of me to perform and perform at a high level every day.

"Back then it was a different culture. It was very loose. I was young, I was stupid, I was naive," he said.

"And I wanted to prove to everyone that I was worth being one of the greatest players of all time.

"Although it was part of the culture back then ... I'm sorry for that time. I'm sorry for my fans," Rodriguez said, his eyes watering.

"It wasn't until then that I ever thought about a substance of any kind and since then I've proven to myself and to everyone that I don't need any of that."

> **"It was such a loosey-goosey era."**
> Alex Rodriguez on Baseball's steroid era

Rodriguez, the youngest player to hit 500 home runs and who with a total of 553 is on course to overtake Bonds' record of 762, said he did not even know the name of the drugs he was taking.

"It was such a loosey-goosey era, that I'm guilty for a lot of things. I'm guilty for being negligent, naive, not asking all the right questions," he said.

"To be quite honest, I don't know exactly what substance I was guilty of using."

After the release of MLB's Mitchell Report in 2007 which found there had been widespread doping abuse in baseball, but did not name Rodriguez, the Yankee slugger was interviewed on the 60 Minutes TV news show and denied any involvement.

REUTERS

TODD KOROL/REUTERS

Cory Sarich hits Habs forward Maxim Lapierre last night.

Flames thump Habs

LAURENCE HEINEN
for Metro Calgary

NHL RESULT

Canadiens 2 Flames 6

THE SKINNY: Matthew Lombardi notched a goal and two assists as the Flames snapped a four-game losing streak, while the road woes continued for the Canadiens, who posted their fifth-straight loss away from the friendly confines of the Bell Centre.

THE FIRING SQUAD: Down 2-1 after the first period, the Flames dominated the middle frame as they outshot the Canadiens 20-3 and scored three times, including a pair of goals by Lombardi and Dion Phaneuf 32 seconds apart.

THE QUOTE: "They capitalized on a couple of chances," Lombardi said. "We stayed positive, stuck with it and the results came."

THE SHORTIES: Lombardi and Dustin Boyd scored on breakaways in the second period while the Flames were killing penalties. Heading into the contest, Calgary had scored only three shorthanded goals, while Montreal had surrendered just four.

SLUMP BUSTERS: With goals in the third period, Rene Bourque brought an end to a three-game scoring drought while David Moss scored for the first time in seven games.

RARE VISIT: A large portion of the 19,289 fans in attendance at the Pengrowth Saddledome showed up to cheer on their beloved Canadiens, who were making their first visit to Calgary since a 3-2 loss to the Flames on Jan. 19, 2006.

THE NEXT GAME: The Flames now head out on a three-game road trip starting on Wednesday night in Anaheim (8 p.m., Sportsnet, Fan 960) when they'll be looking to avenge a 2-1 loss they suffered at home to the Ducks on Saturday afternoon.

Sports in brief

CFL Sources say Alouettes quarterback Anthony Calvillo will return to Montreal next season. The 15-year veteran will make the announcement today at a news conference. Calvillo's return to the CFL was contingent upon the recovery of his wife Alexia, who was diagnosed with cancer in 2007. Calvillo is expected to provide an update on his wife's condition, though indications are that she's doing well.

CFL The Edmonton Eskimos announced yesterday that non-import wide receiver Andrew Nowacki has signed a contract extension that will keep him with Edmonton until 2011. Nowacki caught 28 passes for 369 yards and two touchdowns in 2008.

NHL The Tampa Bay Lightning announced yesterday that goaltender Mike Smith is suffering from post-concussion syndrome but is expected to return to action within the next week.

NHL Los Angeles Kings goaltender Jonathan Quick, Detroit Red Wings forward Marian Hossa and Washington Capitals defenceman Mike Green have been selected as the NHL's Three Stars for the week ending Feb. 8.

NHL The St. Louis Blues have signed injured forward Andy McDonald to a four-year contract extension. McDonald has been sidelined since mid-November with a fractured left leg.

NBA Hornets forward David West was suspended one game without pay by the NBA due to a flagrant foul he committed in Sunday's 101-97 victory over Minnesota. West tomahawked Timberwolves guard Mike Miller on the head on a drive to the hoop. METRO NEWS SERVICES

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Learning Curve is a monthly feature that focuses on education and student life. Next month's issue comes out on March 10.

Learning Curve

SPECIAL FEATURES EDITOR: STEPHANIE BOMBA, STEPHANIE.BOMBA@METRONEWS.CA

Bow Valley grads find work

JENNIFER HILLIKER
for Metro Calgary

Everyone who took a brand-new program at Bow Valley College has gotten a job, even in the midst of one of the worst recessions Calgary has seen.

The class of nine students were the first to graduate with a Bow Valley College's recreation therapy aide (RTA) certificate, where they learned skills to help them in the health industry.

"There is always a need for them. I thought it was something that really needed to be there in my years as a recreation therapist," said instructor Mike Batante, referring to the program.

"You can tell the difference between someone who had formal training and someone who didn't. Calgary had a major lack for this kind of a program — it was really difficult to find someone with this kind of an education."

Most graduates of the RTA program had backgrounds in being a nursing aide or occupational therapy aide. The six-month certificate provided students with tools to better serve patients, Batante said.

"When you hire nurses or a nurse's aide, you get nursing. When you hire recreation therapy aides, you get recreation. Sometimes people think the two cross over, but that's just not the case."

Graduate Martyna Dobrowolska has taken the skills she learned in the program and applies them to her job at the McKenzie Towne Care Centre.

ROBIN KUNISKI / FOR METRO CALGARY

Recreational therapy aide graduate Martyna Dobrowolska.

"Some of the main things I took out of the program were how to improve the quality of life for the residents in a lot of ways: Spiritually, emotionally, physically and cognitively," she said.

Batante said he loves seeing students like Martyna succeed in putting theory behind their jobs.

"They have learned that there is a purpose behind recreation therapy, as opposed to just playing bingo," he said. "They can now really provide opportunities and meaningful experiences to people who are in long-term care."

The group of RTA students were part of the 414 people that graduated from Bow Valley College in January.

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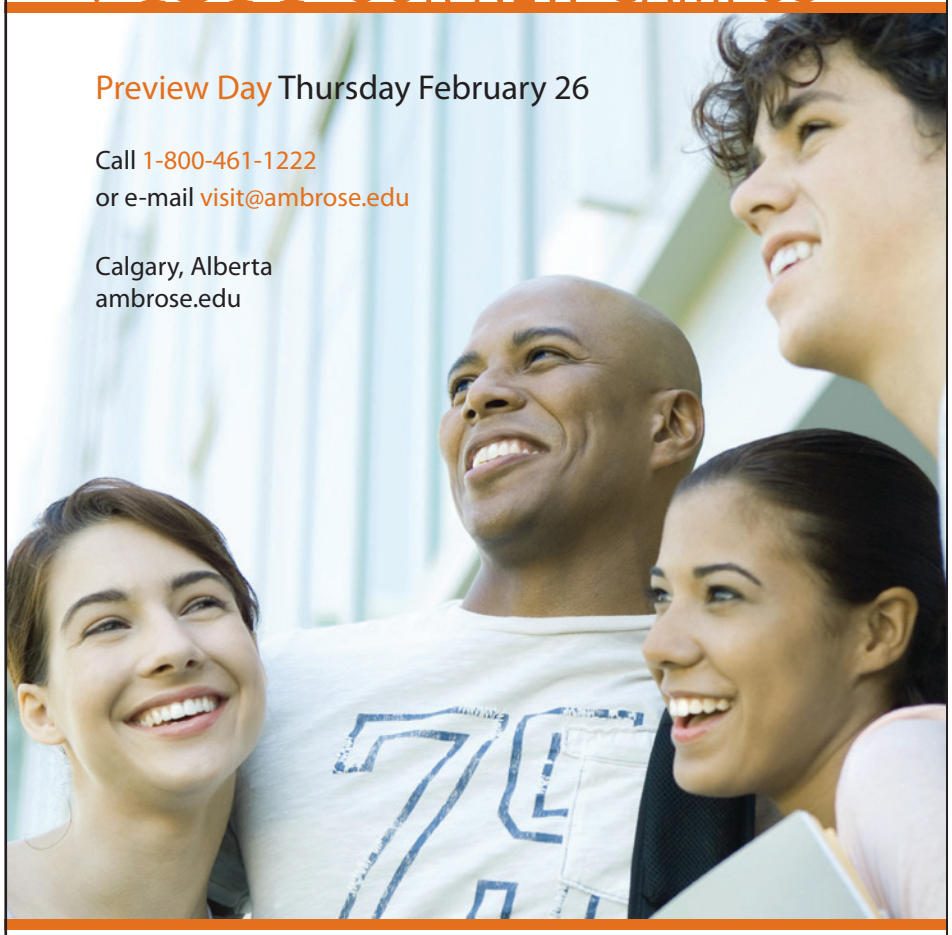

AMBROSE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE | My Christian University College

ACAD's silk screening course a hit

JENNIFER HILLIKER
for Metro Calgary

Unique designs are showing up in independent boutiques all over Calgary — just head to Kensington, Uptown 17th Avenue or Art Central and you'll find drawings on T-shirts by Calgary artists.

The reason many are designing images on fabric is because they've taken a silk screening course through the Alberta College of Art and Design's extended learning program.

"I always wanted to learn how to silk screen, so I figured ACAD was a good place to start," said Karen Klassen, a freelance illustrator in Calgary.

The process is relatively simple, instructor Heather Huston said. Once you've got your design, you impose it on a screen of silk or other fine mesh, with blank areas coated with an impermeable substance. Ink is then forced through the mesh onto the printing surface.

ROBIN KUNISKI / FOR METRO CALGARY

Karen Klassen uses the methods she learned in the ACAD silk screening class for her clothing line, Cabin Fever.

"What's great about silk screening is that it's really accessible and easy to learn. People come out of the class with good technical abilities," Huston said.

"But mostly, they have the opportunity and the ability to find their own voice within this medium. You can play with colour and mix a lot of elements together. I hope they can now use the silk screen to produce their own ideas."

Klassen has found success selling her clothing line, Cabin Fever, on etsy.com.

"I've now incorporated silk screening into my work on a weekly basis," Klassen said. "I'm glad I took the course. It's my job to create and I needed a little boost. The course provided a lot of input to help spark some new ideas."

The course runs next from April 29 to June 24 on Wednesdays from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. The fee is $499 plus GST.

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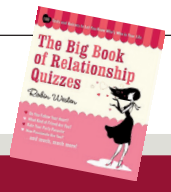

Health & Beauty

EDITOR: ANN-MARIE COLACINO, ANN-MARIE.COLACINO@METRONEWS.CA

Love on the big screen

Rom-coms can create unrealistic expectations in relationships

Psychologists studied students watching 40 top box office hits like You've Got Mail, Serendipity and While You Were Sleeping and found that they were more likely to believe in fate, destiny and predetermined love.

What? Watching romantic comedies sets up unrealistic expectations when it comes to love? Not exactly shocking, I know, but still worth reminding ourselves of at this time of year, when Valentine's Day sets up higher than usual expectations in the romance department. We hardly need movies adding to the pressure.

While, according to the study, romantic comedies would have us believe that if someone is meant to be with you, they should know what you want without you having to tell them, I would hardly stop there. According to my own informal observations, romantic comedies would also have us believe:

- The more you hate someone, the more different the two you are, the more your family hates your date — basically, the more you have going against you when you meet — the greater the chance you'll end up together.
- Your partner ultimately knows what to do or say at precisely the right moment.
- Your partner is always in the mood for sex when you are.
- Great sex just happens without planning or communication and no one ever gets a leg cramp…or passes wind.
- Relationship problems can be resolved within two hours after which we'll all live happily ever after.

Most of us know these movies are unrealistic and we wouldn't want it any other way. Romantic comedies are meant as an escape from reality, an opportunity to bask in a world of happily ever after where love conquers all.

And I know that "Communication Conquers All" isn't quite as romantic sounding, but it's a more realistic place to start. Combine that with regular tolerance, kindness, understanding and some good old fashioned "grinning and bearing it" and you at least stand a chance at putting a dent in, if not completely conquering, most of what comes at the two of you.

In fact, for one tired mom friend of mine, her idea of romance is having her husband get up and change a poopy diaper at 3 a.m.... for the fourth night in a row. Hardly the stuff of movie romance but for her right now, a gesture much more meaningful than flowers or candy.

Valentine's**Day**

TORSTAR FILE PHOTO

According to a new study, watching popular romantic comedies like Serendipity (pictured) will likely have you believing in fate.

Josey Vogels is a sex and relationship columnist and author of five books on the subjects. For more info, visit joseyvogels.com.

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Love well, live long

Studies reveal that a little lovin' can go a long way — for your overall health

Valentine's Day

CELEBRATE VALENTINE'S DAY: Showing your loved one how you feel can be good for your health.

It seems nothing gives the heart muscle a workout quite like love. Studies have shown that women in a happy marriage are much less likely to have risk factors associated with heart disease than their lovelorn friends.

Sex, we know, is good for the heart, too: Men who have sex two or more times a week cut their risk of cardiac arrest in half.

Even kissing and hugging have health perks: Kissing increases saliva production, which reduces the bacteria that cause gum disease (a proven contributor to heart disease); hugging stimulates the release of the bonding hormone oxytocin, and lowers blood pressure. Need any more excuses?

BEST HEALTH MAGAZINE

Studies show women in a happy marriage are less likely to have risk factors associated with heart disease.

besthealthmag.ca

Best Health is now on newsstands. For more Best Health, visit **besthealthmag.ca**

Overwhelmingly, Albertans want their public health care improved, not dismantled.

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Public Meeting

Thursday, February 12th 2009 7:30 PM

Unitarian Church
1703 1st Street NW, Calgary
(Side entrance from 1st Street NW
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Organizational meeting to discuss senior's health care, prescription drugs, for profit clinics, extra billing, two tier health care, and the de-listing of public health services.

Friends of Medicare

For further information contact:
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fominfo@telusplanet.net

NOW IS THE TIME FOR ACTION!

New cast for Dancing with the Stars
The season eight cast of Dancing with the Stars includes: Jewel and husband Ty Murray, Chuck Wicks, Shawn Johnson, Belinda Carlisle, Denise Richards, Lawrence Taylor, Lil' Kim, Steve-O, Steve Wozniak, David Alan Grier, Gilles Marini, and Nancy O'Dell. **PEOPLE.COM**

Entertainment

Studio guest
Sex and the City star Sarah Jessica Parker will be the first guest on the new season of Inside the Actors Studio. The first episode airs Sunday on Bravo. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

EDITOR: DEAN LISK, DEAN.LISK@METRONEWS.CA

PHOTO COURTESY SIX SHOOTER RECORDS

Echoes, the latest album from singer-songwriter Jenn Grant, was released in stores last week.

Suitcase success

Jenn Grant album follows year of steady touring

BRYAN BORZYKOWSKI
for Metro Canada

If an artist needs a sign that they're succeeding in the music biz, living out of a suitcase at their mom's place is as good an indication as any.

While Halifax songstress Jenn Grant would rather be holed up in her own apartment — she's currently searching for new digs — finding shelter at her parents' house was her only option after a year of steady touring.

"I need to find an apartment for tomorrow," says Grant. "I was on the road and didn't find a place to live, but I'm getting tired of my suitcase."

While she'd adamant about renting a new home, now's probably the worst time to move. Her new album — the delicate, guitar-driven folk rock Echoes — is sure to impress her fans enough that they'll want to see her as much as possible in 2009.

And when she does hit the road, don't expect any rock star shenanigans from this soft spoken chanteuse. "I enjoy a few drinks, but I have to keep it normal," she says. "This is work. If you want touring to be your life you can't become an alcoholic."

She's also an avid yoga buff, working out every day, including when she's on tour. "When you sing you have to keep yourself strong in the stomach," she explains. "It's awkward to exercise with other people in a hotel room, so I often find myself in stairwells."

Her focused work ethic is one reason Grant has done so well for herself, despite jumping onto Canada's music scene in 2006. Her debut full-length, Orchestra for the Moon, hasn't just won praise from music critics — she also took home CBC's Galaxie Rising Star award last year.

Although Echoes sounds similar to her last disc, it's much less Feist-y and a little more lo-fi than Orchestra. Part of that has to do with where and how she recorded it. The East Coast songwriter spent about three weeks at an isolated Ontario farm, and recorded all her songs live, meaning everyone played together rather than one instrument at a time.

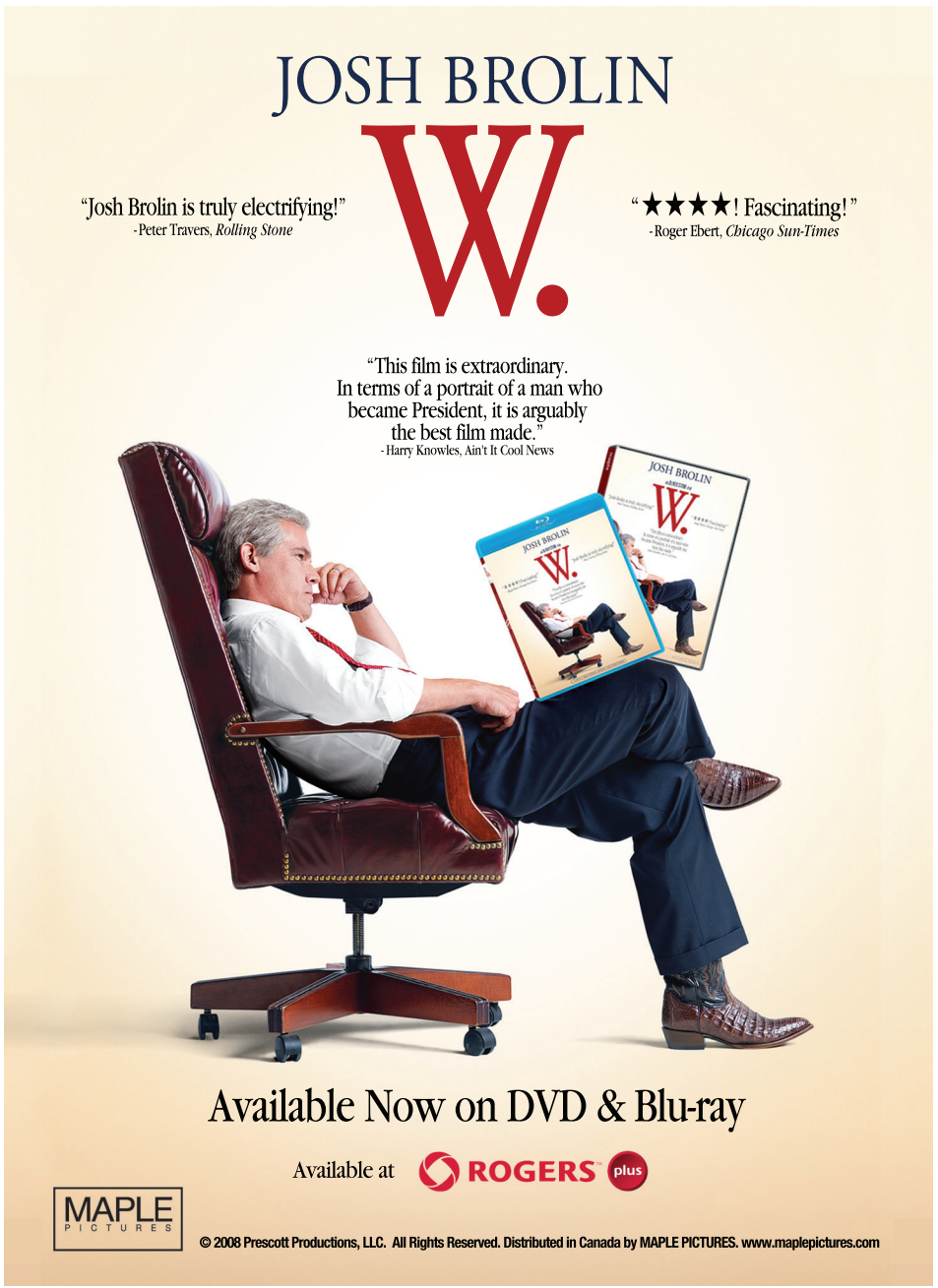
However, working that way meant Grant was singing over and over again, until every instrument was perfect. It was too much for her vocal chords to handle. "I had to take a week off in the middle because my voice got so tired from singing eight hours a day," she says. "So I went to the ocean in P.E.I. and didn't talk for several days."

Button tops overseas box office

MOVIES With 13 Oscar nominations and three BAFTA wins, The Curious Case of Benjamin Button stepped out as the No. 1 film on the international circuit during the weekend, garnering an estimated $31 million US from 5,126 screens in 47 markets.

The David Fincher-directed film hit its stride overseas with No. 1 debuts in Spain and Paris and a No. 2 bow in Japan.

Notable was Button's No. 1 opening in the U.K., where the film earned $3.2 million in three days. Button is the best overseas grosser of this season's best-film Oscar prospects, collecting $72.5 million so far internationally. **REUTERS**



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Healing with Bashir

Israeli film finds support in 'enemy' territory

You can't see Waltz with Bashir legally in Lebanon but you can buy copies of the Oscar-nominated Israeli anti-war film in Beirut's Hamra district where director Ari Folman saw his life change 26 years ago.

"It's one of the greatest films I've ever seen," said Lokman Slim, an activist with Lebanon's UMAM organization which aims to preserve the country's memories of war by screening movies related to its decades of bloodshed.

"I feel jealous that those we should consider our enemies have the courage to revisit events in which they were involved, while we Lebanese are in an endless silence regarding our history," Lokman told Reuters in Beirut.

Waltz with Bashir — the title conveys Israel's alliance with Lebanon's Christian leader at the time, Bashir Gemayel — mixes documentary and animation to depict the trauma of an Israeli invasion 26 years ago to expel Palestinian guerrillas.

The film ends with the massacre of hundreds of Palestinians by Israel's Lebanese Christian allies in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps of Beirut.

Folman was a 19-year-old conscript at the time. His movie has won a Golden Globe for best foreign language film of 2008 and was nominated last month for an Oscar for best foreign film.

In Lebanon, Waltz is banned under laws that forbid trade with Israel. But there is huge interest, said Monika Borgmann, who acquired a copy from a German distributor and organized a private screening in Beirut in January.

"I invited 30 people but they brought their friends with them and we ended up being around 90," said Borgmann, who heads UMAM. "When the film finished, people were very, very silent and when they went out, some had tears in their eyes."

The 81st Annual Academy Awards

"When the film finished ... some had tears in their eyes."
Monika Borgmann

Not everyone is pleased by how Folman tells the story.

"It only presents part of the truth, not the whole truth. It is as if the director is saying, 'We (Israelis) did not commit this crime, the Phalangists did,'" said Ziad Moussa, a retired teacher in the West Bank city of Ramallah where Waltz with Bashir was screened at the Franco-German cultural centre.

But despite his reservations about Folman's depiction of service in Lebanon as an ordeal that left deep psychological scars, Moussa said the film was a "step in the right direction" to healing the bloody past between Israelis and Palestinians.

REUTERS

CA	Vu	SC		7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
2/10/09 primetime	267	351	ACCESS	Truth, Duty, Valour		(8:01) Without a Trace		Cold Case		Law & Order		Truth, Duty
	243	317	CFCN	etalk	Hollywood	Law & Order: SVU		American Idol (HDTV) (N)		(10:01) Fringe (N)		News (N)
	-	-	OMNI	Two/Half Men	The Simpsons	News		News		The Simpsons	King	Metropia
	-	371	KXLY	4 News at 6	4 News at 6:30	Entertainment	The Insider (N)	Be My Valentine		Scrubs	Scrubs	Primetime: You
	245	306	CBRT	Coronation St.	Jeopardy! (N)	Rick Mercer	22 Minutes	Wild Roses (N) (DVS)		CBC News: The National		The Hour
	244	338	CICT	ET Canada	Entertainment	90210 (HDTV) (N)		NCIS "Deliverance" (N)		Project Runway Canada		News Hour
	246	-	CKAL	Law & Order: SVU		Primetime: What Would		Privileged (HDTV) (N)		Scrubs	Scrubs	Your City
	119	705	CBXFT	Virginie (SC)	La Facture	Providence (HDTV) (N) (SC)		Roxy (N) (SC)	Grosse vie (N)	Le Téléjournal et Les Nou		TJ Alberta
	-	-	SHAW	(6) Local Programming						Local Programming		
	-	372	KREM	News (N)	Hollywood	The Doctors		NCIS "Deliverance" (N)		The Mentalist (HDTV) (N)		Without Trace
	-	374	KSPS	NewsHour With Jim Lehrer		Nova "Judgment Day: Intelligent Design on Trial" (DVS)				Killing Hitler		Independent
	502	390	CBC	CBC News: The National		My Son, the Pornographer (N)		CBC News: The National		CBC News: The National		Pornographer
	-	370	KHQ	News (N)	Be-Millionaire	Jeopardy! (N)	Wheel-Fortune	The Biggest Loser (N)				Law/Ord SVU
	-	373	KAYU	The Simpsons	Raymond	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	American Idol (HDTV) (N)		(10:01) Fringe (N)		News (N)
	297	652	WPIX	Privileged (HDTV) (N)		PIX News at Ten Tong.		Two/Half Men	Friends	Sex and-City	According-Jim	Frasier
news	500	500	CNN	Larry King Live		Anderson Cooper 360 (HDTV)				Larry King Live		Cooper 360
	508	502	CNN2	Lou Dobbs Tonight		Nancy Grace		Showbiz Tonight		Lou Dobbs Tonight		Nancy Grace
sports	400	400	TSN	NHL Hockey	SportsCentre		That's Hockey!	SportsCentre	In This Corner	Motoring 2009	Strongman	Winter X
	408	418	net	Best Damn Sports Show		Rodeo: Wrangler Pro Tour		Hockey Central	Flames Week	Sportsnet Connected		Prime Time
	410	403	SCORE	NBA Basketball: Raptors at Timberwolves			Score Tonight	Hardcore Hockey Talk		Poker 888.com UK Open.		Final Score
	411	457	OLN	Mantracker		Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Survivorman		Mantracker		Bounty Hunter
	417	406	SPEED	Super Bikes!	Super Bikes!	Hot Import	Hot Import	Pinks	Pass Time	Speed Report Special Edition		Super Bikes!
family	552	543	YTV	Drake & Josh	iCarly	Adrenaline Proj	Prank Patrol	Malcolm-Mid.	Futurama	Prank Patrol	Prank Patrol	Falcon Beach
	557	541	FAM	Zoey 101	Life Derek	Wizards-Place	Han. Montana	Zack & Cody	Latest Buzz	Wizards-Place	Life Derek	Ned's School
	555	545	TOON	Ben 10	Johnny Test	Totally Spies	Total Drama	6TEEN	6TEEN	Futurama	American Dad	Robot Chicken
	575	583	CMT	Reba	Reba	Hope & Faith	Hope & Faith	Three Wishes		Home Improve.	Home Improve.	Reba
	553	546	TREE	Little Bear	Maggie-Beast	Comfy Couch	Rolie Polie Olie	Max & Ruby	Babar	Backyardigans	Dora-Explorer	Go, Diego, Go!
cable variety	-	-	CHTV	The Insider (N)	E! News	Ruby	Kimora: Fab	The Biggest Loser (N)				News (N)
	505	398	TWN	(5) EarthWatch One		EarthWatch One		EarthWatch Two				
	602	568	W	Style by Jury	Style by Jury	Will & Grace	Friends	Skinny Celebrity Mums II		Style by Jury	Style by Jury	Good Naked
	521	560	TLC	A Very Duggar Wedding		Toddlers & Tiaras (N)		17 Kids-Count	17 Kids-Count	A Very Duggar Wedding		Toddler-Tiara
	603	561	FOOD	The F Word		Good Eats	Good Eats	Iron Chef America		Challenge		The F Word
	615	520	A&E	The First 48 (HDTV)		Manhunters	Manhunters	The Beast "Infected"		The First 48		The First 48
	617	522	SHOW	Wife Swap		The Outer Limits		Mutant X "Kilohertz"		Testees	Trailer Park	The L Word (N)
	601	562	SLICE	Rich Bride, Poor Bride		End of Leash	End of Leash	ET Canada	Matchmaker	Date My Ex: Jo & Slade		Trading Sp
	-	633	ENC2	(7:15) *The Revolving Doors* ★★ (1988, Drama), Miou-Miou				*Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore* ★★★ (1974, Drama)				*Same Time*
	520	505	DISC	Destroyed	Time Warp (N)	Toughest Race: Iditarod		Daily Planet		Destroyed	Time Warp	Race: Iditarod
	620	523	BRAVO	(6) Bowfire		Johnny Cash: Man in Black		Law & Order		Without a Trace		*Shower*
	294	650	WPCH	(6) *Eraser* ★★ (1996, Action)			Seinfeld	Family Guy	Family Guy	*Eraser* ★★ (1996, Action), James Caan		
	626	547	COM	Laughs	Comedy Now	Air Farce	Just for Laughs		Corner Gas	The Simpsons	South Park	S. Silverman
	-	539	TCM	(6) *The Corn Is Green*		*Enchanted April* ★★ (1991, Romance-Comedy), Alfred Molina				*Tunes of Glory* ★★★ (1960, Drama)		
	628	584	SPIKE	UFC Unleashed (HDTV) (N)		DEA Busting up a stash house.		Real Vice	Real Vice	DEA Busting up a stash house.		Real Vice
	522	516	HIST	Ultimate Engineering		NCIS "Angel of Death"		Ultimate Engineering		Ax Men (HDTV)		NCIS
	627	528	SPACE	Star Trek: Voyager		Destination Truth (N)		Stargate SG-1		Star Trek: Next Gener.		Trek: Voyager
	-	-	AMC	(6) *48 HRS.* (1982)		*Silent Movie* ★★★ (1976, Comedy) Mel Brooks.				*Blown Away* ★★ (1994, Suspense)		
	619	525	TROP	What Happen?	What Happen?	Planet Soap	Big Screen	Family Guy	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Raymond	Family Guy
	600	564	HGTV	Sarah's House	Design Inc.	Colin & Justin's Home Heist		Holmes on Homes		Sarah's House	Design Inc.	Pure Design
	501	391	CTV	CTV Newsnet		News	CTV Newsnet	News	CTV Newsnet	News	CTV Newsnet	News
	504	508	BNN	Squeeze Play		Market Call		Headline	Market Call	Commodities	Business News	Squeeze Play
	526	507	VIVA	Missing		Encounters	In Dreams	Psychic Inv.	Encounters	Judging Amy		Missing
	269	350	APTN	Wings-Canada	Great Towns	Wapos Bay	Rez Rides	Fish Out	Mixed Blessing	Caution: Nuts	Rabbit Fall	Moccasin Flats
	-	-	MCP	(6:30) News	News	Matchmaker	Mom's-Upset	Il Caffe		In Germany	Euromaxx	Schauplatz
	571	581	MMM	Gene Simmons	Gene Simmons	Celebrity Wrestling		Listed		Party of Five		Celeb Wrestle
	570	580	MM	disBand	Technical Diff.	Degrassi: TNG	Instant Star	The Shift		Pimp My Ride	Pimp My Ride	Technical Diff.
	581	566	MTV	Cribs Teen Rooms Special (N)		From G's to Gents Sixteen G's arrive. (N)			After	Cribs Teen Rooms Special		G's to Gents

critics' corner

NCIS
Don't get yourself wrapped up in an inner-city gang war when you're investigating the death of a Marine. But that's just what the members of the NCIS team do. Why? Because they don't listen to us. Making matters worse, Gibbs must face down demons from his past when he finds a cryptic message waiting for him at the crime scene. 9 PM on CICT; 9 PM on KREM

The Biggest Loser
It's the 100th episode of the show that makes "fat" a four-letter word, and this week, a balancing competition will bring the winner a coveted prize: a 24-hour visit from a loved one. Then the teams all take part in a tough challenge that really tests their endurance. 9 PM on CHTV KHQ

The Mentalist
All you need is a little mood lighting, soft music and a heaping glass of Courvoisier, right? With Patrick Jane's (Simon Baker) help, Cho goes under cover as a sweet-talking ladies man with all the right moves in order to catch a killer who has his own set of pseudomentalist techniques in "Crimson Cananova." Robin Tunney and Owain Yeoman also star. 10 PM on KREM

SAG labour talks resume next week

UNION The board of the largest U.S. actors union Sunday reconfirmed the recent ouster of their chief negotiator in long-stalled labour contract talks with Hollywood's major studios, said a source with knowledge of the decision. Citing unnamed sources, showbusiness newspapers The Hollywood Reporter and Daily Variety said talks could restart as soon as Feb. 17. A SAG spokeswoman declined to comment. The Screen Actors Guild represents some 120,000 actors.

REUTERS

In brief

TV Married With Children alum Ed O'Neill will star in ABC's half-hour pilot An American Family, which also has cast Eric Stonestreet. REUTERS

GlobalStyle

Kenya Hunt
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he's just *not* that into you

In Theatres February 6 ALLIANCE

Go to metronews.ca and take Metro's Sex & Relationship columnist Josey Vogels' quiz to find out which *he's just not that into you* character you are most like and you could WIN!

No purchase necessary. One entry per person. Contest open to Canadian residents of legal age, excluding residents of Quebec. Contest closes February 10, 2009. Approximate retail value of prize is $599 each. Odds of winning depend on number of entries received. For full contest rules and details, visit www.metronews.ca.

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Committed father

Guy Ritchie is committed to staying close to his kids after his divorce from Madonna. So committed, in fact, that he's reportedly moving to New York City, where Madonna and children have taken up residence. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Celebrity Buzz

Posh gets an early V-Day

ROMANCE David Beckham flew into London for 24 hours to give wife Victoria an early Valentine's Day treat, femalefirst.co.uk reports. The soccer star travelled from Milan on Saturday night, booked a room at exclusive hotel Claridges and showered Posh with expensive flowers and chocolates. Earlier that night Victoria had been spotted dining alone at Locanda Locatelli restaurant.

A source said: "It was the only chance they had to meet up in their hectic schedules." David, 33, then jetted off late Sunday to meet up with the England soccer squad in Spain. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Affleck still hoping for a son

FAMILY Ben Affleck wants to have a son, femalefirst.co.uk reports. The actor — whose wife Jennifer Garner gave birth to second daughter Seraphina Rose last month — is keen to keep expanding his brood until they have a boy. A source close to Ben — who also has three-year-old daughter Violet with Jennifer — said: "Ben's happy to keep going until he gets his boy.

"He has visions of dressing a little guy in Boston Red Sox gear, tossing a baseball around and cheering in the stands together."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Is Jessica Simpson preggers?

RUMOURS The real reason for Jessica Simpson's recent weight gain may just be that she has a bun in the oven. "She hasn't been packing on the pounds because she's overeating," a source tells the Daily Mail.

"The big rumour from her inner circle is that a baby could be the reason she's carrying some added weight." Simpson is dating Dallas Cowboys quarterback Tony Romo. "Those closest to them almost certainly know the truth but they will have been sworn to secrecy,"

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Further charges could follow in Brown arrest

ATTACK Singer Chris Brown was arrested and charged with making criminal threats Sunday in Los Angeles for an early morning attack on an unidentified woman widely thought to be his girlfriend, pop star Rihanna.

Los Angeles police would not confirm the name of the victim, but both Brown and Rihanna missed their performances at Sunday's Grammy Awards, and several media outlets speculated that Rihanna was the unidentified woman.

Brown, 19, was scheduled to perform his love song Forever at the music awards ceremony in Los Angeles Sunday evening, and Rihanna was set to sing her hit single Disturbia.

Neither Rihanna, who was nominated in three categories, nor Brown, who was nominated twice, walked the red carpet, and they were not in attendance for the awards ceremony. Their representatives could not be reached for comment.

As the show was getting underway, Brown turned himself in for questioning by police. Later, he was booked on a charge of making criminal threats and released on $50,000 US bail, according to a Los Angeles Police Department statement.

Brown was being investigated for alleged domestic violence felony battery, and additional charges could be filed after officials review the case, the LAPD said in its statement.

Rihanna cancelled her performance shortly before the Grammys started, the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences said, "We have just been informed that Rihanna will not be attending tonight's 51st Annual Grammy Awards. We're sorry she is unable to join us." There was no further explanation for her absence.

Soul legend Al Green performed alongside pop star Justin Timberlake in Rihanna's place.

Grammy officials made no mention of Brown's performance but he did not appear on stage as scheduled.

Police said Brown got into an argument with an unidentified woman while sitting in a parked car in the city's Hancock Park neighbourhood at around 12:30 a.m. Sunday.

"After stopping his car, Brown and the woman got out and the argument escalated," the police said. "The woman suffered visible injuries and identified Brown as her attacker."

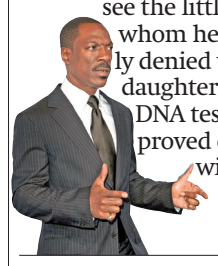
Police received a 911 call reporting the disturbance and according to the statement, when officers arrived they found the victim, but Brown had already left the scene.

Brown, who broke onto the Billboard charts at the age of 16 with his hit single Run It and sold two million copies of his self-titled debut album, also scored a pair of hits on his sophomore effort, Exclusive, in 2007. REUTERS

GETTY IMAGES PHOTOS

Murphy and Scary end support battle

FAMILY Eddie Murphy's child support battle with Melanie (Scary Spice) Brown has come to an end, with Murphy now required to pay $50,000 US a month for 22-month-old Angel Iris until the girl is 18, according to the Telegraph. Murphy also agreed to finally see the little girl, whom he originally denied was his daughter until DNA tests proved otherwise. METRO NEWS SERVICES



Jen throws herself a 40th birthday party

EVENTS Jennifer Aniston celebrated a landmark birthday a few days early. The Friends star, who turns 40 tomorrow, threw a lavish party at her Beverly Hills mansion on the weekend, reports Exposay.com. Guests included Courteney Cox, Tom Hanks, Oprah Winfrey and Jen's boyfriend, John Mayer. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Elton's not amused with David Spade

RUN-INS Not everyone finds David Spade funny. The comedian was having dinner with Courteney Cox in Los Angeles at the same restaurant as Elton John and his husband, David Furnish, according to Page Six. When John seated some of his bodyguards at a table next to Spade and Cox, Spade joked, "I hope he's picking up my cheque, too!" According to an eyewitness, "Everyone laughed but Elton." METRO NEWS SERVICES

Kate's been visiting Owen

ROMANCE Kate Hudson has sparked romance rumours after visiting Owen Wilson "religiously," femalefirst.co.uk reports. Hudson, who has dated the actor on and off since 2006, has been spotted at Wilson's Malibu home several times in the past two weeks.

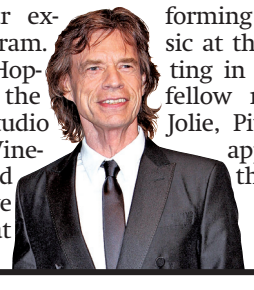
A source told x17 Online: "Kate has been coming to the house religiously. She is here at least a couple times a week and she has been sunbathing in the back yard, hanging out by the swimming pool."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Mick cracks up BAFTA-goers

AWARDS Mick Jagger delivered the top prize — to the evening's big winner, Slumdog Millionaire — and the best line of the evening, at Sunday's 2009 British Academy Film Awards, people.com reports.

Explaining what he was doing at a movie event the same night as the Grammys, the Rolling Stone said he was part of a rock star-movie star exchange program. "Sir Anthony Hopkins is in the recording studio with Amy Winehouse," joked Jagger, "And we are hoping that next week Sir Brad and all the Pitt family will be performing The Sound of Music at the Brit awards." Sitting in the audience with fellow nominee Angelina Jolie, Pitt cracked up and applauded along with the rest of the crowd.



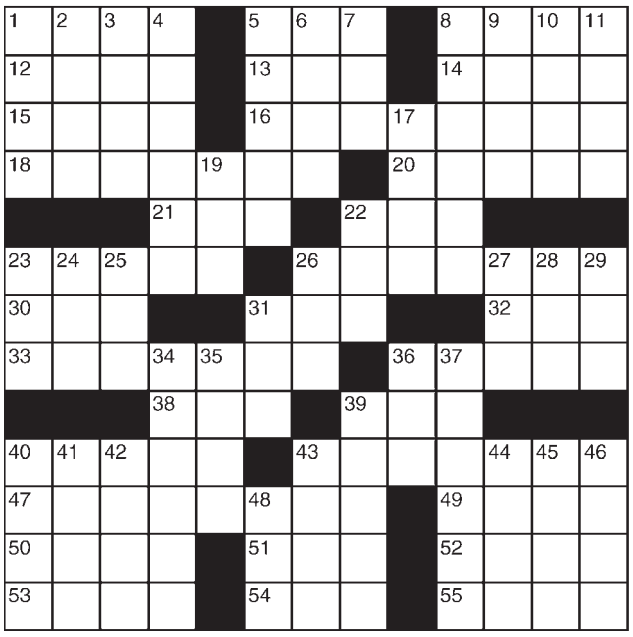
METRO NEWS SERVICES

Today Some clouds -2 C / -7 C
Wednesday Partly cloudy -2 C / -12 C
Thursday Mostly cloudy -7 C / -13 C

BT BREAKFAST TELEVISION

Andrew Schultz, Weather Specialist – Breakfast Television
"I get to spread the word on how your day, evening or weekend will shape up with our ever-changing weather here in Alberta." **WEEKDAYS AT 6 AM**

Take Five



Crossword across

1 GIs' dinner
5 Watch chain
8 Magician's stick
12 Wheel holder
13 Spring mo.
14 Sheltered
15 "Once — a time"
16 Raze
18 Inside information
20 That is (Lat.)
21 Historic time
22 Enemy
23 Ringo or Brenda
26 Insult
30 "Alley —"
31 Scull tool
32 Zodiac feline
33 Disappointment
36 Passenger
38 Puncturing implement
39 Hamburger holder
40 Talia of "Rocky"
43 Twilight start
47 Confinement measure
49 Canal zone
50 Reed instrument
51 Coq au —
52 Slithery swimmers
53 Former German capital
54 Rocker Winehouse
55 Foolish one

Crossword down

1 Handle roughly
2 Big fair
3 Decelerate
4 "Return to —"
5 Islamic decree
6 Admitting customers
7 Support system?
8 Rolled up into a ball
9 Lotion additive
10 11 p.m. telecast
11 Fender bender result
17 Laugh-a-minute
19 Bobby of hockey
22 Bear hair
23 Fa follower
24 Pirouette pivot
25 Suitable
26 Skillet
27 Antiquated
28 Teensy
29 Neither mate
31 Harry Potter's Hedwig, e.g.
34 Dim the lights
35 Still unpaid
36 Skedaddle
37 "Absolutely"
39 Easter symbol
40 Unkempt one
41 Vagrant
42 PC picture
43 Take to the lake
44 Sandwich cookie
45 Executor's document
46 Birds' home
48 Eggs

Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

		6		8	5			
		5	4			3		
			9				2	8
		2	8			9		5
	1						4	
3		7			4	2		
4	6				9			
		3			1	8		
			2	7		6		

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

C	H	I	D		C	U	B		R	I	N	K		
H	O	M	E		U	S	E		A	D	E	N		
A	R	A	B		C	A	S	H	M	E	R	E		
D	A	M	A	S	K		T	I	R	A	D	E		
			R	O	O	M		P	O	T				
J	A	C	K	B	O	O	T		D	I	G	S		
O	A	R		S	E	R	R	A		O	N	E		
T	H	O	U		D	O	U	G	H	N	U	T		
		U	G	H		N	E	R	O					
I	M	P	A	I	R		N	A	P	E	R	Y		
C	O	I	N	C	I	D	E		I	L	I	A		
B	L	E	D		T	I	S		N	U	L	L		
M	Y	R	A		E	M	S		G	L	E	E		

3	7	5	8	4	2	9	1	6
9	2	4	5	1	6	7	3	8
6	8	1	9	7	3	2	5	4
5	3	8	6	9	4	1	7	2
7	1	6	2	8	5	4	9	3
2	4	9	7	3	1	8	6	5
8	9	3	4	6	7	5	2	1
1	5	7	3	2	8	6	4	9
4	6	2	1	5	9	3	8	7

Find today's answers + play more games at metronews.ca

SUDOKU SOLVE TIME:
Under 13 min .....Genius
13-17 min.....Scholar
17-21 min .....Smart
21-25 min .....Not bad
25+ min.....Keep practising

Metro Recipe of the Day

Sauerkraut and Cider Pork

INGREDIENTS:
Nonstick cooking spray
6 pork loin chops with bones, 3/4 in. (2 cm) thick and trimmed
1 lb (500 g) sauerkraut, drained and rinsed
1 large yellow onion, sliced
1 cup shredded carrot
1/2 cup (125 ml) apple cider or apple juice
1 tbsp (15 ml) firmly packed light brown sugar
1/2 tsp (2 ml) dried rosemary leaves
1/4 tsp (1 ml) ground ginger
1/4 tsp (1 ml) black pepper

METHOD:
1 Coat 10-in. (25-cm) nonstick skillet with cooking spray. Heat skillet over moderate heat. Add 3 pork chops and cook 3 minutes per side or until browned. Remove chops. Repeat with remaining chops.
2 Add sauerkraut, onion, carrot, apple cider, brown sugar, rosemary, ginger and pepper to skillet; stir until mixed.
3 Place chops on top of sauerkraut mixture. Bring to boil. Lower heat and simmer, covered, 5 to 6 minutes or until chops are no longer pink inside.

SERVES 6

rd.ca
For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to **rd.ca** or check out **Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!**

Horoscopes

AVATAR VENUS

ARIES ♈
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
You are expected to set a better example to others. A sweet woman will remain loyal and true-hearted. Damaged goods will give you no joy.

TAURUS ♉
APRIL 21-MAY 21
Meet and greet the people who are in charge. A flirtation has an emotional impact. You'll feel a sense of urgency to visit a friend.

GEMINI ♊
MAY 22-JUNE 21
A bully seeks a chink in your armour. A gracious person admits that you were right. Have your skills assessed before a training program.

CANCER ♋
JUNE 22-JULY 22
Last minute details crop up and cause fury. You'll need help in your search for intelligent life. Talking of family causes an argumentative night.

LEO ♌
JULY 23-AUG 23
A blast from the past stops you in your tracks. Don't risk a battle of the bulge. Somebody's temper-tantrums could damage their reputation.

VIRGO ♍
AUG 24-SEPT 22
Using diplomacy in a debate will calm the waters. The end of a project brings sadness and relief. Watch out for hidden pitfalls in a relationship.

LIBRA ♎
SEPT 23-OCT 23
A wonderful man makes you laugh. Trivial problems with a casual romance cause dismay. Those who fight comfort are merely afraid.

SCORPIO ♏
OCT 24-NOV 22
A foolish affectation will be boring. A control freak's conceit will infuriate you. A situation becomes serious and you'll make decisions.

SAGITTARIUS ♐
NOV 23-DEC 21
All eyes will be on you if you horse around. You have much to say about love. Indisputable information is revealed by a blasé person.

CAPRICORN ♑
DEC 22-JAN 20
A stubborn stranger provokes insights. Reflections of the past will echo into your future. Go all the way when presenting ideas to a group.

AQUARIUS ♒
JAN 21-FEB 18
Your work pays off in pleasing ways. The news creates an atmosphere of uncertainty. When you're in doubt, ask for more information.

PISCES ♓
FEB 19-MARCH 20
Get busy doing the things you want to do. An apology changes your attitude. Someone's fragile ego will need some pampering.

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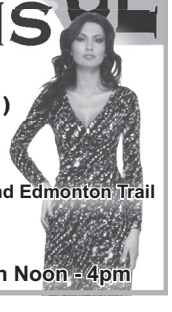

beats & bullets
Ghostkeeper - Beija Flor
Michael Rault - Fox Opera
Axis of Conversation - Nushi
Reuben Bullock - The Neckers
Hunter Gatherer - The Grim Beat
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